

On the last page of last month's newsletter...we made mention of some of the recent cutbacks in record service being experienced by school and college radio stations, and we asked for feedback from you. We heard from virtually every type of station: closed-circuit, carrier-current, cable, 10-watt FM, and higher-powered FM, located on both East and West coasts and a lot of places in between.

We've also just recently had the opportunity to talk with a number of station people, record company people, and others with first-hand knowledge of the situation, whom we met at the NSBC convention in Hartford, put together by the people of WUMB, UMASS/Boston. Also....just this afternoon....I spoke with Mike Bone, Vice President, AOR Promotion, Arista Records...where much of the present situation has been given widespread notice.

The point of all this discussion was to get as much information as possible and not to be stampeded into any "knee jerk" reaction. We wanted you to know as much about the situation as possible...so you can make your own judgements and reach your own conclusions....not based on screaming headlines and emotional slogans, but based on reasoned consideration of the facts.

The cutback in record service to stations is not just at Arista, although you might think that was the case from reading some of the less informed trade reports. When the crunch hit the record companies in terms of sales...they all started looking for ways to cut expenses. In the process, they were forced to re-evaluate all of their promotion efforts. Some went about it intelligently and trimmed here and there where it was expendable...not unlike a skillful physician's use of a scalpel. Others were not so discriminating; they made their cuts with an axe.

Unfortunately, too many college radio stations had taken their record service for granted and were not providing the feedback that told the companies that their products were being received and given valuable exposure. We weren't telling our story well enough, loud enough, and often enough. So, when it came time to make cuts, some did not realize the value of college radio exposure for their product, especially their new artists and music that simply won't get played within the rigidly formatted playlists of commercial stations. Because they didn't understand, they tended to cut. Those stations who had kept in touch, told their story, provided feedback.....those were the stations who lost the least. Companies who realized the unique value of college radio exposure maintained their service.

It wasn't just college radio that was being cutback; some commercial stations felt a drop in service as well, especially the smaller stations in smaller markets. A lot of record company promotion people lost their jobs and were not replaced. Unfortunately, some of them were those who best understood what college radio could do in terms of airplay for artists, and in reaching an audience not otherwise served.

The whole thing really came to a head recently when Arista sent a letter to all college stations offering to SELL them a subscription to their product for \$150/year or to SELL them individual albums at the radio station price of \$2.00 each. Though it was not said in so many words....it was widely assumed that no more free service of Arista product would be provided to college radio stations.

There was immediate reaction from certain stations at both extremes: Some called for a boycott against airplay of all Arista product, including what was already in the station's library; at the other extreme, some stations rushed for their checkbooks to subscribe at \$150/year. At the present time, we cannot agree with either extreme.....although our leaning is more in one direction than the other.

Enclosed with the newsletter is an editorial written by Bob Haber, the publisher of CMJ (College Media Journal). Since CMJ carries a heavy concentration towards the music industry and its relationship with college radio, they are in an excellent position to see things from both the industry and station points of view. Bob's editorial is a well-written expression of concern and a call for reasoned reaction in a united stand.

We find it difficult to accept the proposition that stations should have to pay to purchase product they then promote at no cost to the record companies. There is documented value for the exposure provided by college radio. We are not looking for a handout; we are looking for product to expose to our listeners and by such exposure eventually provide an obvious return to the record companies in terms of sales. We're not on the air strictly to service the needs of the record companies, nor are they in business to provide handouts to us. But, the mutual benefits to both of us are evident when we can work together.

The Arista policy change is the issue grabbing all the headlines, but the stations' concern is not strictly with Arista. There is even more concern that other companies will see this same method as a way to generate additional revenues for themselves as well. What we all fear is receiving similar letters from 10 or 15 other major companies. Few stations can afford that kind of budget expenditure even if the principles involved were of no concern to them.

But...it's not as black-and-white as it may seem. True, Arista has apparently cut off its national AOR service to college stations and replaced it with a subscription offer and/or a single copy purchase offer. However, Arista is still servicing college stations nationally with their jazz product....a fact that has not been realized by some. Mike Bone has told us there are some 200 stations receiving Arista jazz product at present, and service to them is continuing. There are other ways around the "pay-to-play" policy. There are a number of regional Arista promo people around the country who can still provide AOR product to college stations with whom some rapport has been established, and where the station has been able to convince the rep of its value. A list of these regional representatives has been promised by Arista and it will be included with this newsletter. If you want Arista AOR product, it would seem to make sense to get in touch with them... not just pleading for service, but JUSTIFYING your request for certain product and staying in touch with them on a regular basis. This is only common sense and holds equally true for other companies.

What about the boycott? Where does IBS stand? We agree that stations should NOT be expected to pay for product....that you should NOT have to pay for the privilege of selling someone's records and breaking their new artists. For these reasons, we support a boycott against the purchase of Arista product by stations through the offered subscription and/or single copy sale.

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However, if you are able to obtain Arista product service at no charge through regional reps or the continued jazz service, and you desire to air some or all of it on your station, we can't see a problem in that at present. The same should hold true for past product supplied to your station as part of a no-charge service.

At the present time, we see little reason for penalizing listeners by withholding product that already sits on your library shelves because of an "internal" operational matter which they probably don't understand.

According to Mike Bone, in a conversation we had at the end of October, there were about 40 stations who had reportedly sent in their \$150 and subscribed to Arista service. That's not what you would call a landslide. We're glad to see that low figure....even with the September 30th cut-off date specified in the Arista letter. It is apparent that most of our stations have neither the inclination nor the funds to go along with this scheme.

By staying away in droves....by seeking alternate methods of obtaining product at no cost....and by not airing product which they don't receive....our stations may provide their own best help and eventually convince those in decision-making positions of the positive value of college radio promotion and exposure. We've got to convince them that college radio promotion can be one of the most cost-effective means of exposure, especially in new artists and new music. Our stations play music that simply does not get aired on "conventional" stations. And, our audiences are also very different from theirs; while the numbers may be lower, the demographics are better. Our listeners are the trendsetters - out in front, with a disproportionate impact for their size. Our people will be those who staff commercial broadcast stations in the years to come and the artists we help to expose now will be the future superstars for the record companies.

It's all changed around. It used to be that college radio was simply a cheap imitation of commercial radio. We listened to them and tried to copy them. Not any more. Now, they listen to us for fresh ideas and new music.

Record service cutbacks aren't anything new. Eventually most companies recognize the value of what they've lost and service is gradually phased-in again. But, when something like this does happen, it also forces stations to take a closer look at our own shortcomings, and that's a healthy thing. Under the best of conditions, the relationship between a college radio station and the record companies is a sensitive matter, held by a delicate balance.

The united stand being taken will demonstrate the seriousness of our concern to Arista and to the other companies who may be watching their move. We can only hope the situation improves for all parties involved without the necessity for any stronger confrontation tactics.

It is indeed unfortunate that this kind of a problem occupies so much of the time and energy of music/programming people at our stations when there are more important needs to be served. We cannot lose our perspective; we've got to remember who our stations are, and why we're here.

Although a number of stations responded to our call for feedback....particular thanks to those who wrote back quickly, including:

Lee Kelly, General Mgr., WNAS (FM) New Albany, Indiana
Laura Humbert, Music Dir., WCYJ-FM, Waynesburg College, Waynesburg, PA
Steven Vogt, Music Dir., WUVT AM/FM, Virginia Polytech, Blacksburg, VA
Harold J. Pestana, Music Dir., KSCU, Santa Clara, California
Tim Eby, Station Mgr., WUEV (FM), Univ of Evansville, Evansville, IN
Karen L. Rugg, Music Dir., WGSU-FM, SUNY, Geneseo, New York
Kevin G. Hegebarth, Music Dir., WONC (FM), North Central College
Ron Wickerham, Pgm Mgr, WLCC, Lansing Community College, Lansing, MI
Deb Miller, WUPJ, Music Director, Univ of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, PA
Eli Hull, Music Dir., WGLS (FM), Glassboro, New Jersey

Registration cost information and other details about the upcoming IBS National Convention (March 6-7-8, 1981 - Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.) are being put in the mail shortly to all IBS member-stations. If you don't get your mailing soon....drop us a note or give us a call, and we'll get an extra copy out to you. You will not want to miss this one if at all possible to get there - just ask anyone who's been to an IBS National Convention before.

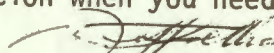
By the way....we're still planning sessions, topics, and speakers. If you have any ideas or suggestions on any of these, please get in touch. Some of our panels feature industry professionals while others utilize students as moderators and participants. There is no pay or monetary remuneration, but it's a good chance to gain some exposure and to help others with your expertise.

Information is also on the way to IBS member-stations about a new taped program series, "In Praise of Sailors, Young and Old" which is available to a limited number of stations at no cost on a first-come, first-served basis. If you haven't received the material yet....watch for it. If you have received it, and you're interested, return the order form quickly. In the past, the response to these no-cost programs has been very strong and you'll have to act fast if you want to be among those stations who take advantage of this offer.

There's also a copy of the new Taped Programs catalog on the way to you, with descriptions and costs for the selected program series we make available. You'll find the cost extremely low - virtually just the cost of the tape, the duplicating, and the mailing, because most of the programs are contributed by member-stations and other sources at no cost to us. Rod Collins, our Vice President for Programs, has put together another interesting collection, so watch for it, coming soon.

For stations doing a lot of remote sports broadcasts, especially "away" games which tend to increase your long-distance phone bill, you might try looking into one of the new alternative long-distance services being offered through outfits like MCI or Southern Pacific Communications (Sprint). Depending on where you are, and where your away games take place, and the size of your long-distance phone bill each month, you may be able to achieve some substantial savings in your phone bill. Of course, if you have access to a WATS line, either at the college, or through the generosity of a local business who let you use theirs for after-business-hours games, that may be even better.

Remember, we're here to provide help and information when you need it. No question is "too small".....so stay in touch.


Jeff Tellis

Arista Records
Regional Promotional Representatives

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11/80

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- 2) Jeff Cook/Southern Regional
(404) 349-5200
- 3) Fred Davis/Boston
(617) 628-7755
- 4) Gregg Feldman/San Fran.-Seattle
(206) 762-1056
- 5) Candy Fleming/Minneapolis
(612) 933-2286
- 6) Rick Galliani/West Coast Album Director
(415) 981-8787
- 7) Mac King/Charlotte
(704) 568-7473
- 8) Joan Lawrence/Memphis-Nashville-New Orleans
(615) 297-9433
- 9) Dave Loncao/Midwest Album Regional
- 10) Jean MacDonald/Detroit
(313) 525-7600
- 11) Tom Moran/Chicago
(312) 478-1133
- 12) Dave Prescott/Florida
(305) 685-7601
- 13) Pete Schwartz/Los Angeles
(213) 553-1777
- 14) Rob Sides/Houston-Okla. - New Mexico
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Mike Bone, V.P., AOR Promotion, Sherry Winston - Jazz Promotion.

The Arista Decision: United We Stand

Editorial

College radio is furious, and rightfully so, at Arista Records' decision to end free promotional record service and replace it with a subscription service carrying a \$150/year price tag. But before fingers are pointed and accusations go flying it must be acknowledged that there is one, and only one reason for this occurrence — the record industry, at least its vast majority, seems to think that college radio is dispensable. Arista's move is only symptomatic of that train of thought.

So then, college radio, at this point in time, has but one alternative. It must seize the moment, "take the bull by the horns," so to speak, and prove definitively, once and for all that the record industry needs college radio more than college radio needs the record industry. Far fetched? Not in the least. All the ingredients are already in place:

- 1) There are over 1000 college radio stations in America with a collective audience of tens of millions of listeners.
- 2) With commercial radio ever-tightening its format, college radio is the last hope for the exposure of up and coming artists and new cultural trends. Since college radio is not bound by ratings, it can be more adventurous in its programming.
- 3) The majority of college stations are retail sales-effective; granted, unit sales are substantially lower than commercial stations. Yet the percentage of college radio album buyers when compared to its total number of listeners is dramatically higher than those influenced by pro-radio. In essence, an active leadership is present in the college spectrum; an aware, music-conscious audience that translates into sales.
- 4) The college programmer of today will be the program director, music director, and announcer on tomorrow's commercial stations. He/she will certainly remember those companies which treated college radio with respect and those that did not.

- 5) Today's top commercial programmers recognize the importance of college radio. To borrow a few quotes:

"College stations communicate with our music department and turn us on to a lot of new music. A lot of our jocks get turned on to a new piece of music by listening to the different college stations. It's a filtering process. College stations can go out and take chances with music. We don't have that latitude. College radio is really valuable for musical input."

— Tony Berardini, WBCN

"I'd like to relate how important the college music scene can be in breaking new acts. For example, WMBR, here in Boston have been pioneers in the area of new music and (their) listenership includes all of the actives in the Boston market. They have been experiencing a drastic decline in the amount of record service since the 'recession in the music biz' began. This avenue of stimulating record sales will no doubt be affected by lack of airplay when these stations don't get the new LP's. True, college radio can only draw a small percentage of the total audience, but those who listen are the most active listeners as well as the opinion-leaders who determine trends in music. Record companies should follow up with service when trying to break new acts. It would solve many of the complaints along with frustrations at having new bands and artists who can't get airplay on commercial stations."

— Kate Ingram, WCOZ (FMQB)

(over)

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"One quote I hear tossed about is that radio is not in the position to develop new artists indiscriminately. Well, college radio is, and support and development is exactly what a lot of the new artists need to establish themselves in the days to come. Do we really need to chop off our right arms? I've had to service some of the local college radio stations with my copies of the new releases and I know it's not my job."

— Frank Andrick, *KSJO (FMQB)*

- 6) Trendsetters in the industry have rallied behind college radio:

"I listen to college radio because I regard it as a part of an alternative distribution network. I think it's as important as the press and clubs.

— Robert Christgau

Village Voice, Senior Editor

"I think college radio is the most important segment of radio. It lacks the definitive category position that commercial radio is involved in. Fitting into one of these commercial radio categories has always been a problem for us except on college radio. We're putting out an eclectic sound and that's what all of our artists are about. I wish there were a name for it. Maybe it should be called college music."

— Larry Rosen, *Co-Founder*
GRP Productions

"Some of the most interesting stuff is on college radio stations. It's a good time for a small radio station now that there is so little that's alternative..."

— Lenny Kaye

Patti Smith Group, guitarist

"College radio is a great place to expose (these types of developing) artists. We're strong believers in college radio and we'll continue to take care of it... They expose new art forms; the radio station itself is an art form... Besides taking care of college radio for the sake of experimenting with new music, we do it because it breeds future broadcasters. Many people in college radio will be top commercial programmers one day."

— Burt Stein, *Director of*
Promotion
Elektra/Asylum

"...Although impossible to gauge the effect of college radio on record sales in comparison to commercial stations, likely estimates suggest between 10% and 15% of sales are generated by college play..."

— Robert Fripp

"College radio is some of the best radio in the country... It plays a lot of great music, things you never hear. It seems so more lifelike, so more real, lively..."

— Southside Johnny Lyon

"... College radio is an alternative to commercial radio in that it is an end in itself. Free from the economic considerations of the commercial stations, college radio has the rare opportunity to make a significant mark on the radio scene and to influence radio programming trends today, the way FM did ten years ago. College radio can take hold of this new generation of music and lead the market, providing a platform for the new generations of artists to get the exposure they need, and to really be an alternative to commercial radio..."

— Miles Copeland, *President*
I.R.S. Records

- 7) Not only do millions of college students listen to college radio, but the vast majority of them will rally around a college radio cause and will certainly support it in a time of need. Lest we forget, even the most conservative survey of college market record buying habits credits that demographic with well over half a billion dollars spent annually.

And the list goes on and on. Why then does a medium that's so potentially explosive have such an identity crisis? It's a Madison Avenue dream come true. The problem is public relations! When a decision is made that is not in college radio's best interest, what happens? A few stations will take a stand but the majority will back down and comply. That is not the way the battle is won. College stations around the country must begin to communicate — first with each other and then with the entire industry.

When you feel angry or ripped-off let others know —

— and you'll be surprised how much support there is out there. One station's demands are relatively impotent when compared to a thousand-station supporting a cause. Remember — college media people will be the leaders of the American communications industry in the not too distant future. That's a force to be reckoned with.

If all this sounds like a call to arms it is more appropriately an attempt to incense the college radio community into taking positive action. The Arista decision is simply the proverbial "straw that broke the camel's back." In a sense, who can blame them for trying? If Arista records can get \$150 from a college station, they'd be fools not to take it. So the finger cannot be pointed at Arista — it must be pointed at college radio if

it forks over the bread. The point being made is that it is time to say a resounding "NO." And, "NO, WE WILL NOT PAY FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF SELLING YOUR RECORDS AND BREAKING YOUR UP-AND-COMING ARTISTS."

Of course there is an unfortunate casualty — the talented, struggling musician. Yet it is hoped that Arista and other companies will come to their senses before this avenue is closed to too many up and coming musicians.

We've dealt with abstracts long enough. As for the problem at hand, dozens of stations around America are currently boycotting the Arista subscription service. CMJ endorses the boycott and urges other stations to support the protest. If you feel that you must have Arista product, contact a local retail outlet or commercial radio station and see if they will donate a copy; they often have many more than they need. Perhaps a record store will underwrite a half hour or hour of programming in exchange for a certain number of LPs. As for your listeners, it would be a shame to involve them with the internal politics of college radio-record company relations. But if there is no resolution of the problem within a few weeks it may be in your best interest to inform them why certain records are not being aired. College radio must maintain its credibility in the eyes of its listeners.

The key to resolving not only the Arista problem, but elevating the reputation of college radio as a whole lies in stations coming to each other's aid at this time. This is a problem for the five-watt carrier current station, the ten-watt FM non-comm, and the 50,000-watt commercial college station alike. In fact, the more powerful and influential a station is, the more it is needed to join ranks with its college brethren. This is even more difficult with the realization that many of these college powerhouses have not had their Arista service terminated. But their support is necessary nonetheless. In fact, even if you have already mailed a check in, your support is still needed. Perhaps there is a way you can be refunded. Solidarity is the key, college radio! If you can stand firm, united on this one, a dangerous precedent can be stopped cold. And Arista, in time, will realize how truly important college radio is.

As a postscript, it is hopeful that someday, the ominous problem of good record service will not be the primary concern of so many college radio music and program directors. More time should certainly be spent on airing alternative music, and thought-provoking, community-minded special programming. Remember, it is college radio's penchant for non-conformity that sets it apart and above the rest.

By the way, isn't it ironic that Arista, one of the most progressive of the major labels with its Savoy re-issues, Novus Jazz, and GRP product would stop servicing college radio? Or maybe they think Anthony Braxton will be added at WPLJ...